

# PEOPLE & THINGS

By ATTICUS

**D**URING the last few days we Londoners might have been excused for wondering if anyone is left at home in the outer Commonwealth. How easy it is on one's travels abroad to say: "Do look me up when you come to London." But even if it interferes somewhat with one's essential engagements, which of us does not feel a renewed pride in being a citizen of London Town?

As in no other country, the Houses of Parliament are the biggest draw for the tourist. Who would go to Paris or Washington or even to Bonn merely to see where the Parliamentarians sit and agree to differ? Therefore it is a happy coincidence that at this time of the year we have so many unimpeachable witnesses from that triumph of compromise known as the Commonwealth.

## Massive Mr. Menzies

**W**E in the Mother Country can have no favourites, but it is difficult to withstand the massive frame and character of Australia's R. G. Menzies. By nature the Australians are an independent-minded people who dislike regimentation and do not worship idols. Yet Mr. Menzies has dominated the political scene for years on end.

Physically he is not unlike Sir Roy Welensky, who rose from a professional pugilist to be Rhodesia's man of destiny. If Menzies and Welensky fought it out in the ring the referee would be wise to stay out of range.

On the other hand Pandit Nehru is so slight and thin that one feels that a wind might blow him from the Terrace into the river. Whatever one may think about his political leadership of India, no one can deny his sense of dedication. Yet when I listened to him a few days ago at a small informal gathering his voice was so weak that it was difficult to hear him. Rebellion engendered its own vitality, but government of a country which is politically undeveloped can be a merciless grind.

## Patient Exiles

**N**OT unnaturally the man who has stolen the picture is Mr. John Diefenbaker, whose sensational victory in Canada confounded the experts as well as the man in the street and the woman in her home. He has a quiet humour which makes him both a good talker and a good listener—joint qualities not often found in politicians.

Incidentally he will be in full view at the Canada Club annual dinner in London, when he will be the guest of honour. His suddenness from the growing fraternity of Canadians who live and work in London and for some reason are content to remain on this side of the Atlantic.

The members of the Canada Club are a patient lot of men inasmuch as year after year they listen to speeches by prominent British statesmen, who sweat up the subject and inform the Canadians present that their country has great mineral resources, that it is bounded on the north by the Arctic and on the south by the great friendly American Republic; that its future is full of promise and it has proved to the world that two races, such as the British and the French, can live in amity together under one flag.

## Sir Anthony's Recovery

**B**EFORE we leave Westminster and the subject of our vibrant Commonwealth, let me record that Mr. Harold Macmillan, who has been in the midst of all his duties to visit Sir Anthony Eden in the country, is delighted with the

progress that Sir Anthony is making. He is in good spirits, he is taking a keen interest in what is ailing his strength and is growing all the time.

This was the report that the Prime Minister gave to his intimate friends, but it is borne out by a high medical authority who attended Sir Anthony in Boston and has seen him here since his return.

It is a paradox of politics that Suez, which severed companionships and divided loyalties, has made Sir Anthony Eden one of the most popular men in the world. His story has not ended, despite his retirement from politics.

## Fashionable Frauleins

**T**HIS other day I lunched with ten or twelve young German women journalists who, almost without exception, were making their first visit to this country.

Traditionally German women have admitted the superiority of the male and have regarded clothes as a covering of the body rendered necessary by modesty and the climate. But something has happened since the war. These young people were as smart as any that France could have sent us.

With the limitations of the male I cannot describe their clothes in technical terms except to state that they pleased the eye. But they were also well groomed. If you will forgive that sporting metaphor, and of course they spoke English charmingly, albeit with an accent.

It would seem that there has been a quiet revolution going on against the traditional figure of the worthy Frau following meekly at the heels of the all-important German male. Incidentally the lunch was organised by the Central Office of Information which performs many good tasks and seldom has the chance of taking a public bow.

## A Sheffield Tribute

**S**OON on its way to America is a 300-piece canteen of Sheffield cutlery which the Master Cutler, Sir Peter Roberts, M.P., is to present to President Eisenhower in Washington next month. He leaves for America on Tuesday.

The gift is from the Cutlery Company of Sheffield, and is similar to that presented to Sir Winston Churchill when he received the Freedom of Sheffield in 1951.

Sheffield's finest craftsmanship has gone into the canteen, which was greatly admired by guests at the company's Fortzest Feast on Friday night. The main pieces, with pearl handles, bear the arms of the Cutlery Company's some, such as carving knives, also have a facsimile of the Master Cutler's signature.

President Eisenhower will personally receive the gift from the Master Cutler, who will be accompanied by Lady Roberts in Washington on July 16. An inscribed plate on the cabinet records that the gift is in appreciation of President Eisenhower's courage and leadership in association with Sir Winston Churchill during the war.

## Farewell, St. James's

**W**E Londoners should not only be shocked but ashamed and successfully lobby the abolition of the entertainment tax on the live theatre believed that St. James's would be reprieved. But it is not to be. In fact, things have gone so far that it would be impossible now to save it.

It is true that St. James's is not on the Piccadilly, or Shaftesbury Avenue front, but

in character, charm and tradition it will be irreplaceable. Here Wilde's comedies were played to occasional noises off from the Marquess of Queensberry. Here Vivien Leigh and Sir Laurence Olivier gave us Shaw's Caesar and Cleopatra and Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra on successive nights. Here a play of Charles Dickens was produced with the youthful author making a curtain speech after nearly every performance.

Why did the Arts Council not increase it? With the immense increase of tourism London will more and more become the Mecca of the vast, English-speaking community who share the glory of our dramatists throughout the ages. In an era of centralised direction in so many aspects of life one might have thought that the authorities would have shown a more sensitive realisation of what the London theatre means to the English-speaking world.

## Shakespearian Horror

**T**HE arrival of the Stratford company's "Titus Andronicus" in London stirs afresh my wonder that this sixteenth-century horror comic should not only have been chosen for a major European tour—no less astonishing than that "Look Back in Anger" should be



Vivien Leigh and Sir Laurence Olivier in the production of "Titus Andronicus".

served up to the Russians as representative of our contemporary life—but also have been so triumphantly successful alike in Paris, Belgrade and Vienna.

It is, of course, besides being a tour de force of production by Peter Brook, a spectacular vehicle for Sir Laurence Olivier's unrivalled technical art and Anthony Quayle's controlled dynamism, which make even its unmitigated blood and thunder acceptable.

A friend of mine who was at the opening night in Paris tells me that after the rapturous reception at the Theatre des Nations (mild clapping) is usually the highest tribute from Paris first-nighters) Sir Laurence and Lady Olivier went for supper with some friends to a restaurant much frequented by theatrical celebrities. As they entered, every one rose to their feet in a spontaneous and unadvised gesture of applause. Now over to Harold Hobson next Sunday.

## More About Statues

**M**Y comments last week on the need for revising our public statues has produced a correspondence which is not only very large, but highly individualistic. There were practically no champions for the retention of the Duke of Cambridge and his horse, nor, indeed, for Field-Marshal Earl Haig and his mount. One writer suggests that a fitting tribute to Shakespeare would be a garden in Southwark as near the Globe Theatre as possible. Another reader asks where is the statue to the great Queen Elizabeth? "Gloriana"?

A former librarian of the Imperial War Museum quotes an amusing yet scathing attack

on the statue of Field-Marshal Smuts endeavouring to maintain a pose which would be trying even for a youthful ballet dancer. Yet another correspondent wants a monument to William Ward, who did so much for cricket by being the saviour of Lord's from the speculative builder and also presided at the meeting which led to the formation of what is now the Surrey County Cricket Club. A further interesting letter comes from a Norwegian reader who describes how splendidly Ibsen and Björnstrand stand outside the National Theatre in Oslo.

In a wild burst of extravagance I shall give a prize of £5 for the best suggestion (according to my judgment) for the subject of a new monument. The candidates should be drawn from the twentieth century and be no longer living. Letters to Atticus, c/o THE SUNDAY TIMES.

## A Medal Restored

**A**T a party held last Wednesday at the War Office, the Secretary of State for War, Mr. John Hare, presented the Master of the Worshipful Company of Coachmakers and Coach Harness Makers with a duplicate of the medal awarded Africa General Service Medal.

The original was awarded to the Company at the same time as several other city companies received them, on the recommendation of Lord Roberts himself. "In appreciation of the spontaneous and patriotic liberality of the Companies in raising and equipping the City of London Imperial Yeomanry." It was also laid down that the medals should be awarded with all the campaign clasps earned by the Volunteers during the war.

But the Coachmakers' medal disappeared when the Coachmakers' Hall was destroyed during the Blitz, and Wednesday's presentation came about from a chance remark which the Company was entertaining the entire Army Council to dinner last January.

## Lucky Jim in Portugal

**I** HEAR that the manuscript of Mr. Kingsley Amls's new book is expected any day now by his publisher. After two highly successful novels he is essaying an unusual and difficult literary form. The new book will be partly a travelogue, partly a study of Portugal where he went on his Somerset Maugham Award, and partly fiction. Mr. Amls, after describing the trials and tribulations involved in taking a Portuguese family to live in a Portuguese hotel, relates how he met an old friend in a local bar.

The friend's name was Jim Dixon. What on earth Lucky Jim was doing in Portugal is a mystery to me. This mixture of genres is a difficult one to essay, and I am intrigued to see how Mr. Amls will handle the technical problems involved.

## Good Prophecy?

**L**AST week we quoted that an old and veteran of lawn tennis, Sir Norman Brook, to the effect that Ashley Cooper of Australia would win the men's singles at Wimbledon. Certainly the man's handling of the veteran Drobny by the youthful Cooper would suggest that Sir Norman's prophecy may prove true.

In any other walk of life Drobny would be a young man but in the merciless combat of the courts at Wimbledon he is a veteran, whose experience could not prevail against the vigour of youth combined with skill and confidence.

## Down the River

**I** SEE that Lord Waverley, in his capacity as chairman of the Port of London Authority, took some distinguished visitors on a tour of the Thames at an official launch. He is a good host on such occasions and the river is full of interest as it winds its way to the sea.

It recalls the incident some years ago when a deputation of Russians came here and were

taken for a similar trip down the river by the then Sir John Anderson. During the next day or so the Russians met in conference with Sir John presiding. In the evening they went to the opera at Covent Garden and were received by Sir John in his official capacity concerning the arts.

It was said that on their return to Moscow the deputation reported that Britain was not a democracy, but was ruled by a dictator named Sir John Anderson. Even if the story is apocryphal it is a good one. Incidentally Oxford University has just conferred upon Lord Waverley the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters.

## People and Words

"Traditions are like lamp-posts. Wise men use them to guide their paths. Drunkards use them to support their instability."

—VISCOUNT HALSHAM.

"My unkind friends say that during the Wimbledon fortnight I always manage to finish my cases by lunch-time!"

—MR. JUSTICE SLADE.

"If John Milton, with things to say in a splendid way, had had to fight his way through a jungle of busts and binkies, corpses in woods and tiny kisses in the dark, to find a tiny space between a strip cartoon and a new detergent, he would not have bothered to jot down the 'Apocrypha' at all!"

—SIR ALAN HERBERT.

"I say little on the telephone now—except 'I can't pay until the rise comes through!'"

—MR. LESLIE HALE, M.P.